

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4271

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT LOUIS 1138

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MP PINT UN SA

SUBJECT: RAMPHUL IN MAURITIUS ON CONSULTATION

REF: PORT LOUIS 0984

1. ACCOMPANYING PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM WHEN HE DEPARTED, DECEMBER 5, FOR NEW YORK TO RECEIVE UN HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD WAS MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR TO UN RADHA RAMPHUL. RAMPHUL HAD BEEN BACK IN COUNTRY FOR APPROXIMATELY TEN DAYS, HAVING ARRIVED, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN STATEMENT, AT INVITATION OF PRIMIN. OTHER SOURCES CLOSE TO MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, HOWEVER, STATE THAT RAMPHUL WAS RECALLED FOR CONSULTATIONS AS RESULT DOMESTIC DIFFICULTIES RESULTING FROM RAMPHUL'S INTERVENTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA BEFORE THE UNGA WHILE ACTING AS HEAD OF AFRICAN GROUP (REFTEL).

2. RAMPHUL'S STAY IN COUNTRY HAD, IN FACT, PRECIPITATED SERIOUS CLASHES WITHIN TWO MAJOR ELEMENTS OF GOVERNING COALITION; LABOR PARTY, WHICH, BY AND LARGE, SUPPORTS RAMPHUL, OR AT LEAST PAYS LIP SERVICE TO MAURITIAN ADHERENCE TO OAU PRINCIPLES, AND PMSD, WHICH PURPORTS TO FOLLOW MORE PRAGMATIC APPROACH WITH REGARD MAURITIAN RELATIONS TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA, PARTICULARLY AS

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CONCERNS TEA PURCHASES AND TRADE (PRETORIA 4289).

3. RAMPHUL'S RECENT PRESENCE IN MAURITIUS PROVOKED SLINGING MATCH BETWEEN NEWSPAPERS FINANCED RESPECTIVELY BY LABOR PARTY AND PMSD, AND BROUGHT INTO OPEN SIGNIFICANT DIVISIONS THAT EXIST WITHIN COALITION. PRIMIN SIR SEEWOOSAGUR RAMGOOLAM ATTEMPTED TO STAY ABOVE BATTLE, DEFENDING RAMPHUL TO SOME EXTENT, BUT FALLING BACK ON ARGUMENT THAT SOUTH AFRICANS HAD TAKEN HIS STATEMENTS MORE SERIOUSLY THAN THEY SHOULD HAVE.

4. SOME MINISTERS WERE REPORTEDLY IN FAVOR REMOVING RAMPHUL FROM HIS POST AT UN OR AT LEAST, AS FACE-SAVING GESTURE, TRANSFERRING HIM TO WASHINGTON, WITH AMBASSADOR TO US BALANCY AGAIN TAKING UP DUTIES AT UN. THIS APPARENTLY DID NOT WASH, AND RESULT HAS BEEN A SOMEWHAT DAMPENED COMMUNIQUE, WHICH INDICATES THAT "ALL AMBASSADORS BELONG TO FOREIGN SERVICE AND ARE UNDER IMMEDIATE AUTHORITY OF MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WHOM IMPLEMENTS CABINET DECISIONS."

5. COMMENT: STORM OVER RAMPHUL HAS NOW DIED DOWN, BUT QUESTION REMAINS WHETHER HE HAS BEEN CHASTIZED -- AS CLAIMED BY MINEXTAFF DUVAL -- OR WHETHER HE WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE OUTSPOKEN LINE AT UN. HIS BRIEF STAY IN MAURITIUS COINCIDED, IN FACT, WITH PERIOD WHEN GOM CONCEDED ON SOME POINTS WHERE IT HAD EARLIER DIFFERED WITH OAU PARTNERS: E.G., RECOGNITION OF GUINEA BISSAU (SEPTTEL). SULLIVAN

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